

PACIFIC WEEKLY

A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION



JULY 15, 1935

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BUILDING BRIDGES

THE GUILD MOVES ON

DON'T FORGET JACKSON

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THE THEATER

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A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

VOLUME III MONDAY, JULY 15, 1935 NUMBER 2

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NOTES AND COMMENT

IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIALLY PACIFIC WEEKLY is showing a decidedly healthy state of being. Weeks do not go drably by with constant concord in the matter of the magazine's contents. "Epic and Revolution", by Earl Du Freyne French, in this issue is a case in point. There have been some editorial family battles about this contribution. Of my associate editors with whom I have had the opportunity to confer, two have damned Mr. French's opinions, deductions and convictions almost from beginning to end; another considers them a distinct contribution to what we are trying to get at—candid, frank and vigorous diagnosing of the ills that assail us. For myself I see in Mr. French's attempt at a solution of things abhorrent, much that is feasible, more that at least is worth consideration and still more, perhaps, that is directly opposed to my own ideas and ideals. Most of us feel that we could take Mr. French very much to pieces and show him in the main to be a thing of shifting sand rather than structured in brick and stone. Well, what are we here for but to give sounding boards to muted voices? Here, maybe, is a cry from a quite unproductive wilderness, but it is a cry and we give it wing. At least, the way is open to argument and that in itself should further our end, turn into sound waves more muted voices and contribute in the main to, shall we say? our United Front. Which should please Mr. French, too, if he really wants to decapitate this Capitalist dragon.

—W. K. BASSETT

SOME MUCK-RAKING

ONE Milus Gay, with his Monterey *Trader*, is doing a pretty little piece of muck-raking in the old California capital city. He and a Mr. J. O. Malloway, a merchant, have the past week had Monterey city and county officials rather

walking around in circles and talking to themselves. It is more to the point that he has the officials wondering just how much he knows and, which is more to the point, just how much he intends to find out.

The *Trader* of July 5 was composed, almost entirely, of the story of "Jack" Malloway who it appears, sold firecrackers on July 4 in violation of the city ordinance because, he said, Chinese merchants were doing it and the city was wide open anyway, in slot machines, gambling joints and prostitutes, as a welcome for the sailors from the U. S. S. Idaho, anchored in the bay.

Malloway was arrested and sent to jail in lieu of payment of a fine. His friends paid the fine and forced him out from behind the bars. This annoyed him, but he went back to his shop and sold more firecrackers. He was arrested again. He told the court all sorts of things he perhaps shouldn't, according to the *Trader*, about open law violations and such. Then the city officials began telephoning to each other; the district attorney rose to the heights long enough to ask the city attorney "Are you abdicating?" and then he, too, vanished from sight and call. Everybody managed to pass bucks back and forth and disappear conveniently at opportune times and long enough to permit a proper reception of the Idaho sailors and witness their departure speeded as had been their pocket money.

Milus Gay is doing a good embryonic job with the *Trader*. Someday he'll be graduated to a realization that it's a job you can't just play around with, and he'll enlist his vigorous little weekly in the cause that intends to go clear through without any quibbling with the vultures who prey on the grafters and the graft victims alike. We'll extend to him then the right hand of fellowship.

READ IT, BERNARR

SOME few weeks ago, when the youth of the country was beginning to have sleepless nights in anticipation of the day which encouraged noise instead of frowning upon it, one Bernarr Macfadden, high priest of inanity, was building up an ultra-patriotic fervor out of which would come an original idea for the dressing up of *Liberty* magazine July 4th week.

Came the week and came *Liberty* and came the cover of it bearing a scroll and an imitation hand-lettered reproduction of the Declaration of Independence. Many of us paused before a newsstand and read the inviting cover. Sort of a natural interest in an antique probably prompted this; that, and a yen to remind ourselves of what the document actually said. We read on down through the lines of hybrid Old-English and discovered that the cover carried us only to . . . "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of—"

There the page breaks and we find the line "continued inside". It appears to break right at the most interesting point. Just what is the "right of" in the opinions of these fathers of our country—wise, foreseeing, courageous men that they were? It would be interesting to learn. It costs us a nickel to refresh our memory this far. We take the magazine away and by searching clear back among the advertisements we find the

continuation of this sentence: "... the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

Now, that's something we had possibly forgotten about. It leads us to a thought about what those wise, foreseeing, courageous fathers of ours did concerning the situation they found surrounding them. Did they "alter" the form of government under which they were living—and suffering? No, it seems, they didn't. They took the other step suggested—they abolished it. And how did they abolish it? By revolution!

My God! does Macfadden know this?

A SOCIOLOGICAL NOTE

THE following sociological note appeared in the *Chronicle* of July 7:

FIVE ORDERED INTO QUENTIN DUNGEON

Five men are in the dungeon at San Quentin for prison rules violations.

Three letter writers are included. Howard Ford, 25, Alameda county robber, wrote his brother to send another prisoner \$5; M. A. Parsons, 22, Siskiyou county check writer, asked a doctor to obtain a job for William Wilson, 40-year-old Los Angeles county robber. Wilson was caught attempting to smuggle a letter he had written in search of a job.

HARRY AND ANNIE

IT HAS been interesting throughout the week to watch the attacks on Harry Bridges and the group of militant longshoremen he leads. So rabid has the antagonism to that un-American phenomenon—stubborn loyalty in a leader to the people he leads and represents—become, that employers and "reasonable" conservative labor leaders have been hard driven to find logical reasons for their hatred.

First, the *San Francisco Chronicle* had a long article, purporting to be reports from "men on the waterfront", showing their growing hatred for and distrust of Bridges because he was going East to seek fresh fields for his overweening ambition. The meeting at Dreamland Auditorium on July 5, with about 8,000 laboring men and women taking off the roof with applause for Bridges, nailed that sadly misinterpreting "interpretation". (If Bridges is so ambitious, why does he arrange to be paid, as president of his local union, the same sum as the janitor, \$35 a week? Mr. William Green receives \$25,000 a year.)

Then, both *Examiner* and *Chronicle* whistled in the dark to the tune that Mr. Bridges was going to "lead the left-wing attack on the national leaders at the Convention being held in New York". Bridges sought to "oust Ryan"; Bridges would be "content with nothing but Ryan's job". Bridges was going to "set off fireworks..." Bridges replied quietly—he's a very quiet-spoken man—that the West Coast delegation's points would be made in the resolutions. This was too tame for the papers. So Tuesday they set up a straw man. **DEFEAT LOOMS FOR BRIDGES**... "Wind being taken out of Bridges' sails"... "Radicals Face Defeat"... "Reds Lose Votes"... "Communists Given Defi", and a great usage of "hurled", "flung", "revolt", "fiery", "flaming". Nothing happens. Speakers are introduced and speak—Mayor La

Guardia, and Mrs. Anna Rosenberg of the NRA, and Jimmie Braddock, a past longshoreman, and Bridges sits with his arms folded in the convention hall like any other regular delegate—with none of the pyrotechnics the newspapers had prophesied.

The feeling was prevalent on the convention floor that the wind had been taken out of Bridges' sails by the anti-communist speech of Ryan Monday.

Did the *Examiner* seriously believe that Bridges supposed Ryan—hated labor betrayer, according to the dock strikers of last year—would not make an anti-communist speech? They class Ryan with Fisher and Easley.

So what now? Wanted: new tactics. And here they come:

The left-wing group have started two papers: *The Waterfront Worker*—a mimeographed sheet appearing twice a week; a running comment of good-humored remarks about the people they don't like; and now a new printed 4-page, 5¢ paper appearing weekly: *Voice of the Federation: Official Organ of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific* (published every Friday at the Golden Gate Press). What does the right wing do? It starts a mimeographed sheet, *New Waterfront Worker*, with slippery remarks about the left-wing leaders. The stevedores laughed at it. So now is announced, in the *Examiner* (July 10) the formation of a new paper run by "organized labor" called the *California Federationist*. And who runs it? Edward Vandeleur, accused of helping sell out last year's general strike; Paul Scharrenberg, ousted head of the Sailor's Union of the Pacific for anti-union activities and, yes, hold on to your seats—the recent labor reporter for Mr. Hearst's *San Francisco Examiner*, Al T. Baum. (Indeed, by your company ye shall know them.) And you don't have to read far to see that this new "organ" of "organized labor" labels communists "termites", (the favorite American Legion name for them, as who should know better than Al T. Baum?) and indulges liberally in such Hearstian remarks—complete with caps, black-face and exclamation marks—as:

The MOTH sneaks into your home and deposits hidden destruction.

COMMUNISM is the MOTH of ORGANIZED LABOR.

The DRY ROT is the unseen evil of the fruit and vegetable growers. It bores from within.

COMMUNISM is the DRY ROT of ORGANIZED LABOR.

The BOLL WEEVIL pest ruins cotton growers of the South.

COMMUNISM is the BOLL WEEVIL of ORGANIZED LABOR.

UNION LABOR cannot countenance COMMUNISM.

UNION LABOR MUST battle COMMUNISM to the last ditch.

Even the phrase "Labor's Enemy No. 1" is taken from the Communist pamphlet on Hearst—which sold 10,000 in three days—and which calls Hearst "Labor's Enemy No. 1".

These are Hitler's tactics to the last tic. Take the language of the radicals, get backed by the Nazis and betraying Social Democrats, and attack the only people fighting fascism 100% today.

The American working man must see through these tactics. He must guard against this new employers' trick: the attempt by ruse, dishonesty and inflammatory remarks, to turn labor against labor. Just as in the general strike employers tried to make out that real union men broke up workers' clubs and

communist meeting halls (only the *Call-Bulletin* gave the game away by reporting it was "men dressed as teamsters"), just as in Carmel they tried to put sculptors and popular magazine writers at the head of the vigilantes against the other writers, so now they are trying again to put American working men against American working men.

It was left to Annie Laurie, however, to hit the highwater mark of these tactics. She attempted to turn wives against husbands! Mr. Hearst is caught trying to break up the American family, dragging American morals to the level of his Russians! Annie Laurie ended her tirade against Bridges by wanting to know "What does Harry stand for anyway? Henry? Then why not grow up, man, and call yourself Henry." Oh, Annie!

LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

HARRY BRIDGES is up to something much more terrible than the conservative papers are telling us. He is not out for the Presidency of his union. He represents a growing movement among the rank and file of Labor to get rid of all the old labor officials who, once loyal, have come to be more useful to and more popular with the employers than with the workers. He is but one of the many bridges labor has to put across. If and when he is a President we outsiders will know that, not only are the old "reasonable", but all labor bosses are out, and the rank-and-file workers rule organized labor on the waterfront. It's an inevitable step of labor, of democratic development, that this not so "alien" workingman represents or personifies.

I REMEMBER once I was bidden to "stay for lunch" with a very rich and powerful capitalist who was to be host to two well-to-do and powerful A. F. of L. officials. Woll was one of them and they were both like that. I grinned. "I'll spoil your conference," I said. "Oh, not at all," the innocent rich man said. "It's a radical labor proposition we are to consider, a move to put an end to strikes and all labor troubles, so that we businessmen can be free to go ahead without fear. Labor will be a 'fixed charge'. It's a pretty radical scheme and you're a radical." Well, I stayed. When the big labor men arrived, they were visibly shocked at sight of me. You'd have thought I was a bomb. And to make a long story short—There was no conference that day, until after lunch. The one observation I registered was that those labor leaders were more conservative, more capitalist than I was. They were more against labor than the genial capitalist was.

Well, Bridges has gone East as a beginning of the abolition of all those labor bosses who are more Wall Street than Wall Street. And that is what the big dailies are not telling. I doubt if they know it; I suspect that they don't want to know it. If Organized Labor, if all our unions ever represented the working people, it would be more serious than if the legislature did, or the governors, or the Senate. I'll go a step further:

If Labor really came to represent labor, it would be, not the end, but the Beginning for all of us. For white collar workers, for the liberals, for the people, for art and science, for culture and for civilization.

Yes, Bridges' journey East is front page news—every day. I hope the reporters get it.

OUR LONDON correspondent reports the arrival from Spain of many such "swallows" as flocked from Germany a couple of years ago; nice people who are not sure "that the failure of the October revolutionary uprising (in Spain) was a final smashing of the revolutionary forces". They say we'll see what they fled from next October or anyway within a year. France, too, shows something new: the lower middle class is disturbed and appearing in the united front. Maybe that explains why the Socialists are stepping up beside the Communists.

A CARGO of seventeen members of the League of American Writers, headed by Clifford Waiting for Lefty Odets, arrived in Cuba where the police arrested the party, took them ashore and probably provided them with a lot of fresh stuff for plays, novels and essays. They deported them.

TAKE IT from me: muck-raking leads to entertainment, not to action. It's the other way around. Action leads to information.

FRANKLIN HICHBORN, a watchman at the legislature for many years, a veteran reformer of my old days, says that the two houses, senate and assembly, should be reduced to one body and that one reduced in the number of members. But he would raise the salaries of the members and abolish the lobby. We can't abolish the lobby as we might a branch of the legislature. Why not merge lobby and legislature and make them the whole show?

EINSTEIN AND Brisbane seem to agree that we cannot comprehend the universe; too big and too complicated, they say. We—you and I—we might as well join in this conclusion and settle the matter for once and all. And be done with it. There are lots of other questions on which to disagree, some of them near and pressing.

THE SPORTING world was interested in the tennis racket between the two Helens for the championship of the world. The climate of California won either way. I wonder if it isn't said climate that accounts for the superiority of all of us, both individually and in the mass.

REACTIONARIES SHOULD realize that besides beating

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the president and his mistaken New Deal and other ineffective projects, they are laboring successfully to show that all reforms that save the system tend to make a revolution inevitable. We can't do it slowly, piecemeal; easier to do it all, at one fell blow. The "evolutionists" force the revolution. I could postpone the deluge, the "big men" can't. Sometimes it looks as if the Russians had a man and money in Wall Street. Either Karl Marx has an agent on the capitalist side or he foresaw just what their interest would make them do. I remember that in 1929 a Moscow paper which took weeks to get to New York used to predict events that had already transpired among us; they had happened while the papers were crossing the ocean. And their explanations were the best we got. The Communists boasted that the Communists in Russia understood capitalism best, much better than our economists, but I argued that they only were free of our interests; that we could see as well as the Russians did, if we were not blinded by our desperate wishes. And I was seeing at the time the blinded who were leading us blind.

ROBERT CANTWELL writes in a personal note that he wants and means to make his next New York letter on Thomas Mann and Clifford Odets. Mann, the great novelist, has been in New York City, and Odets, the new playwright who wrote *Waiting for Lefty*, is just back from Cuba. But the difference between these two artists is a crack that is splitting modern art. Young writers have a craftsman's use for what Cantwell will be reporting in his letter. The *New Masses* has a number on and with a lot of short stories showing that the new school of short story writers is getting away from some of

the fool rules that were gripping modern writers. Our fiction writers should read this July 2 number of the *New Masses*. There is food for them in it.

HEARST IS right. I have been seeing teachers in our schools and colleges who report and illustrate the tendency to go left. They rarely teach communism, however; they don't dare but they don't have to. The kids ask questions and the wise teachers take the eager, curious young minds and open them wider. They might send the kids to Hearst and other leading citizens, to the vigilantes and policemen for answers to their problems, and so make "reds" of them. No child would be satisfied with the stuff that fills our grown-up heads. Did you ever listen to the young on us old folks? It is something awful.

GIRLS AS well as boys are on the loose, wandering around the country on railroads and hitch-hiking. I have talked with some lately and, if I were a respectable citizen, I would be scared. I'm a little nervous anyhow; they are so blank loose.

AND THE clergy, too. Why, some of them are almost Christians. Yes, I have had visits from clergymen who have been reading (and getting) the New Testament. Some of these responsible conclaves of churchmen should forbid the Bible in these dire days. It is no fit book to read in the depression that reaches up unto the reader himself.

WISH I could get up and go see Upton Sinclair. Wouldn't tell him a thing he doesn't know, honest I wouldn't.



THE GUILD MOVES ON

BY JEAN WINTHROP

PEOPLE who can still afford to subscribe to newspapers don't find anything in them about the people who write them—those new marchers in the American labor movement who are only just discovering where they are going.

The members of the American Newspaper Guild are not men and maedchen in uniform. They carry no banners. Some of them stride along up in the vanguard of the working class, and some straggle back within hollering distance of the guy on the white horse.

But as a body they have defined themselves to this extent—in September there will be a nation-wide referendum on whether the American Newspaper Guild will seek immediate affiliation, as an international union, with the American Federation of Labor.

This was ordered at the Guild's convention in Cleveland, where the delegates voted in favor of affiliation by 76½ to 47½. Seven delegates announced, after the vote was taken, that they had voted against the resolution favoring affiliation because, although they favored affiliation, they were withholding approval until passage of a provision for a two-thirds referendum of the entire membership. Another delegate hold-

ing three votes, which were to have been cast in favor of affiliation, was not present to cast them.

Thus it was estimated that the pro-affiliation convention votes actually represented more than 75 per cent of the membership. It will require a two-thirds vote of the membership to achieve affiliation.

Whichever way the vote goes, the future of the Guild is conjectural, with feeling sharp on both sides. Some predict company unions to rival the A. F. of L. union, if the vote is favorable—Hearst company unions—some predict company unions to take the place of the Guild, if the vote is unfavorable—Wagner Bill or no Wagner Bill. Some predict mass resignations by the defeated side, whichever it is. But there is a solid center core to the Guild, whose fibres are too tough to be torn, who feel that throughout the Guild's historic course it is destined to meet the traditional enemies both within and without, and to resist them.

Resolutions not followed up by action may be but straws, but here are some of the resolutions passed by the Guild's second annual convention at Cleveland which suggest the trend of the wind—or maybe tornado.

The Guild reaffirmed its stand taken at the first convention demanding the immediate release of Tom Mooney, and favoring the release of all prisoners imprisoned for labor activities and political beliefs.

The Guild "denounced encroachments upon civil liberties, particularly upon the freedom and integrity of the press and all forms of censorship, and pledged stubborn opposition to Fascism in whatever guise." Among the whereases of the resolution, alien and criminal syndicalist laws, and "violently-minded vigilante committees formed to break strikes and to stamp out effort no matter how mild to improve social and economic conditions" were denounced.

Another resolution, for the integrity of news, pledged the Guild to strive to achieve for newspaper workers freedom of conscience to report faithfully and to refuse "by distortion and suppression to create political, economic, industrial and military wars".

In a resolution on relief projects and pay the Guild declared that "President Roosevelt has proposed wage standards on projects which are utterly inadequate as well as destructive of the wages of all workers".

The Guild voted to favor independent political action in fraternal cooperation with all other sections of the labor movement, and empowered its officers to take as active a part as possible in furthering all movements for an independent Labor Party.

It was written into the constitution to promote industrial unionism in the newspaper industry.

The convention went on record for a labor "bill of rights which labor should insist upon". Such a bill of rights would include the right to organize freely, to bargain collectively through representatives of its own choosing, to strike, picket, urge boycott, and to enjoy all governmental privileges enjoyed under other conditions, while on strike or locked out.

In order to make this effective, according to the convention report, it is necessary to press for legislation which for instance would make it illegal for an employer to interfere in any way with employee organization, to dominate such an organization, to refuse to bargain collectively, to refuse to show his books when he pleads financial inability to meet the proposals of his employees, to keep his plant open and operating when Federal troops or any troops or police agents are in the vicinity to suppress civil disorder in connection with a strike in the plant.

To lead the Guild in its program of making working and living conditions better not only for newspaper workers but for all workers, Heywood Broun, whose column occasionally appears in the *San Francisco News*, was re-elected president, by acclaim.

Broun, long identified with the struggle for workers—remember how he left the *New York World* when he disagreed with Ralph Pulitzer on his right to columnize on the Sacco-Vanzetti case—is sometimes criticized for not carrying on the struggle more vigorously in his present syndicated column. The critics, perhaps, do not realize that although Broun writes a column every day, it is the publishers' pleasure as to whether that column shall be printed.

Jonathan Eddy, called in the *Guild Reporter* "the Paul who has carried the Guild gospel across the nation, midwifing many of the 71 local Guilds", was re-elected national executive secretary. Eddy left his nine-year-old job with the *New York Times* to devote himself to the Guild two years ago.

Morris Watson, on the city desk of the *Associated Press* in New York, was re-elected to the post of national vice-presi-

dent for wire service employees.

Don Stevens, who organized the first Guild on the Pacific Coast, and is Telegraph Editor of the *San Francisco Examiner*, was re-elected national vice-president, and member of the National Executive Board—the size of which was reduced from 16 to 8. Stevens was the Northern California Newspaper Guild's delegate to the Cleveland convention, carrying the local Guild's instructions to battle for affiliation.

The local situation gets stiffer, with more than 30 newspapermen having been fired from Bay region papers in the last few months. The papers have been crying "economy" to their employes, explaining they were saving money by reducing their staffs. At the same time they have been publicizing Fair Play Leagues and their ilk, and editorially praying with fellow-employers for voluntary continuance of NRA trade and labor practices. In their editorial columns the papers point out that it is not true economy to fire men, because that increases unemployment. They do not point that out to the men they fire. They just say they're "sorry". Since the collapse of the NRA the mortality of Guild men on Hearst papers, especially the *Oakland Post-Enquirer* and *San Francisco Call-Bulletin* has been particularly high. When publishers economize they do not fire non-Guilders.

Nationally, Hearst's International News Service and Universal Service have taken advantage of NRA's demise to revert to the six-day week. A nation-wide protest by all Hearst employes, led by the Guild, has been begun, local Hearst chapters participating.

At the same time the Guild has another national fight on its hands. A strike of seven Guild members from the Lorain, (Ohio) *Journal*, which started as a lockout because the staff would not sign a statement pledging themselves to give the publisher a week's notice of any strike, was laid on the Guild's poor doorstep, impoverished by the convention and the successful Newark *Ledger* strike.

But a national assessment was levied, and the fight goes on.

+

NINE MONTHS AT JACKSON

BY JOSEPH BARAS

MEANWHILE, do not forget Jackson. Don't forget that loose knot of towns, in the yellow grass foothills that even look like gold, where unconquerable men have been for nine months in a state of siege.

You have to have more than a quick temper to stick it out for nine months, isolated, faced by company and vigilante and county officialdom, your very courage exploited by advisers with axes to grind. The Jackson strikers are of the breed which provided the West with the motto: "The cowards never started, and the weaklings died on the way." They're of an American mixture of origins welded by common cause. They're young—there's a special reason for that, a grim reason. The average working life of an Amador County gold

miner is six years. Then the quartz dust in his lungs kills him. There have been 300 known deaths directly from that ugly disease—silicosis—in the last 10 years. Silicosis is the reason for the strikers' youth—and one main reason for the strike. Something like fifteen thousand dollars apiece would install ventilation in the mines which would save those lives. The companies won't install it. So men die—and so men strike.

They will never go back to die. They will not die any other way than fighting. If they should go back without the strike being won, that would not mean that the strike was lost because the strike would still not be over; only sleeping, only resting to gather strength. The companies know this, and so if the strikers should thus retreat, in order to attack better, they expect that there would be a good many "fatal accidents" in the mines. But the Jackson strikers are not afraid.

They are running their own strike now. Outside help they will take because they mean to return it; outside advice they will warmly welcome; outside domination they firmly, politely reject. The aristocrats of the State Federation of Labor used to be Jackson's advisers. Their advice did not work. Their words and their acts did not jibe. They persuaded Jackson to leave relief and publicity in their hands exclusively, and—the weekly relief checks have lately averaged under \$150.

They told Jackson; "You've got 'em beat if you only sit still!" and—the mines reopened, the scabs are learning not to wreck the machinery any more, the weakest strikers are beginning to crack from sheer inactivity.

The Jackson strikers are good A. F. of L. men, but they are not going to follow anybody blind any more. The old guard are out. The strike is being run by a rank-and-file committee; stumbling, inexperienced, but—ready to learn, beginning to learn.

The best example of the change at Jackson is the Workman case. "Speed" Workman was arrested last February for "possessing a concealable weapon, a billy or a blackjack". Work-

man and another who was with him spent three months in a damp, reeking county jail. The other, Canales, is still there. So long as Workman relied on the A. F. of L. officials, he stayed there, too. An A. F. of L. representative explained to a University of California delegation that this was all right, a few months in jail could do such Red hotheads no harm.

Workman was not a Red. But this sort of treatment had the normal effect; Workman, angry clear through, looked elsewhere for aid and got it. He called in the ILD (International Labor Defense).

And that act had also the normal effect which the Federation officialdom never realizes: the ILD came—and conquered. It bailed Workman out. It conducted a defense so brilliant that the best efforts of a vigilante-ridden jury were needed to convict.

They did convict. Workman—emaciated, coughing from his months in that jail—faces prison, on one of the stupidest frame-ups yet. He was arrested, the Sheriff admitted, for "absolutely nothing" and not booked till later; the "concealable weapons" were found in the car only after it had been parked fifteen minutes in front of the Number One Vigilante's law office; the District Attorney admitted that if it weren't for the strike Workman would never have been arrested. Canales, in jail, says grimly, "Jails are for men and women—not children", but begins also to think of switching his appeal to the ILD. They will win. The people of Jackson, who listened to and liked the ILD, will see to it that though the trial was lost the appeal or some other appeal will win.

They will win the strike. Skirmishes have been lost, whole campaigns may seem lost, but they will win. How can they lose? They have courage, both the fighting kind and the four-o'clock-in-the-morning kind; they have or are developing organization firm but democratic; they will follow advice yet not follow it blindly; and they have what it takes. The cowards never started, and the weaklings died on the way.



EPIC AND REVOLUTION

BY EARL DU FREYNE FRENCH

DURING the fall of 1934 all California asked: "What is EPIC? Is it a blessing or curse? Voters to the number of 879,000 believed it a blessing, and indicated their conviction at the polls. Since that time EPIC has become a national movement, and presently all America will be asking the same question, for the American people are today seriously searching for a way out of the socio-economic dilemma in which we find ourselves.

The truth about EPIC has never been impartially told, for a very simple reason—politics. Radical party politicians cannot tell the radical truth about EPIC without destroying their own parties; capitalist politicians cannot without destroying capitalism; and EPIC politicians will not because they are politicians—which means they are, consciously or unconsciously, clever liars and deceivers who hope to mislead the people into

the cooperative-commonwealth. It remains, then, for an avowed revolutionary to tell it all and the world be damned, for in no other way will anyone ever have the opportunity to judge EPIC honestly.

2.

EPIC proposes to end unemployment and poverty through a program of production for use, with the federal government backing it with all its facilities and resources. This, in brief, means the socialization of another liability—the socialization of a machine made surplus of wage earners and their dependents for which capitalism has no further use. If the EPIC program is carried out these people will be placed on a production for use basis in socially owned farm and factory colonies, linked together by exchange and trucking systems, and will produce for their own consumption. Two questions im-

mediately arise concerning this program: (1) Can it be done? (2) Do we want to do it?

Answering the first question also partly answers the second. Not only can it be done, the capitalists themselves will eventually be forced into doing it. There is no escape from Socialism. There can be no permanent repair of capitalism. And capitalists themselves will eventually resort to the socialization of unemployment and poverty (as they ever socialize liabilities) in order to prolong their own lives as practicing capitalists.

This must be obvious to anyone who has ever seriously contemplated the problem of saving capitalism. Assume for a moment that you desire to prolong this system, and discover for yourself the futility of it all. Here in America we have one-fifth of our total population living upon some kind of charity—over twenty million on relief alone, and no one knows how many million living off their families and friends. These people are no longer useful in the capitalistic sense of the word. They are not even useful as consumers, for what they are presently consuming is either coming out of the capitalists' pockets, or out of the pockets of people who normally spend all their earnings anyway. Therefore this unwilling beggar class, or, in Hitler's phrase, this "surplus population", is about the least necessary entity on the face of the earth.

Moreover, this surplus population constitutes the only real menace with which capitalism has to deal: it is final proof that capitalism has broken down. No longer is the cry: "Capitalism robs the workers!" It has become: "Capitalism can no longer care for the people!" The radicals of yester-year condemned capitalism on moral grounds; now we are compelled to condemn it on economic ones. As a way of life it has so long outlived its usefulness that millions of docile wage-slaves have been involuntarily kicked out of wage-slavery and into economic exile. As wage-slaves they would never revolt; but as impoverished exiles, as a beggar class, they will revolt unless something is done.

And what can be done—how can this surplus population be disposed of?

There are but four methods: (1) murder the whole batch of them; (2) colonial imperialism—new land; (3) destroy all machinery and return to handicraft methods of production; and (4) production for use.

The first method, murder, is out for any number of reasons. It would entail too much work, to state the most obvious one. The second is also out, because in the first place we are not imperialistic in this sense; and in the second, the field is overcrowded already. While thirdly, as long as machinery means wealth, and wealth is owned and controlled by capitalists, there will be no destruction of railroads, power-plants and factories. This leaves us, finally, with production for use—not because (as capitalists) we may want it; but because it is the only way by which this surplus population can be taken off our backs (remember, we are still trying to save capitalism!)

Now, for our second question: do we revolutionaries want production for use? This really means: Is EPIC the way out?

We have already indicated that we cannot avoid production for use, for the capitalists themselves will be driven to adopt it. Beyond this, however, it will not preserve the capitalist system unless it is so restricted and curtailed in its operation as to keep the now unemployed perpetually below the poverty line! If EPIC is established forthrightly it will almost immediately abolish capitalism by attacking it from several different angles.

In the first place, the socialization of the unemployed will immediately destroy the surplus of cheap labor, and therefore

leave capitalism at the tender mercies of the labor unions. Without a world of starving wage-slaves willing to sell their souls for a song, capitalists will be unable to break strikes, and so will have to pay higher wages than they ever dreamed of having to pay—that or get out of business.

Second, the present form of unemployment relief is in reality a business relief, in that each relief dollar is made to give up its pound of profit. Following the socialization of the unemployed, therefore, will go the dole harvest to the tune of several billion dollars per annum of business. This will abolish a mathematically estimable number of capitalists, and so leave us confronted with a smaller army of enemies.

While finally, and most importantly, EPIC will place Socialism in direct competition with capitalism as a way of life.

Can capitalism hope to survive such competition? It cannot. No one is fool enough to work for one-tenth of what he produces when he can get it all by the simple process of changing jobs. Capitalism cannot provide a standard of living at all comparable to that possible under Socialism. Place Socialism in competition with capitalism and see what happens: there will follow a wholesale desertion of the drifting ship of capitalism almost overnight, and soon it will be left high on the rocks, without either worker or market.

Is it not so?

3.

"But capitalists will never allow such a thing to happen!"

Granted, they will do everything in their power to hamper it, and to the very last will try to preserve their own lives as practicing capitalists. They will resort to production for use because they will be compelled by economic law—but they will attempt to preserve poverty in order to preserve a surplus of cheap labor, and because they cannot afford to allow Socialism to compete openly with capitalism. Any revolutionist knows this. Any revolutionist knows well enough that the capitalists are not to be caught napping by any amount of smart political strategy. But the revolutionists know also that the matter does not end here. In fact, we only now come to the revolutionary aspect of the movement.

Today one-fifth of our people are living in economic exile. But, for the most part, they are still unaware of it, thanks to their SERA wages and their hopes of "recovery", when again they can enjoy all the dubious blessings of wage-slavery. Only this SERA confusion and "recovery" optimism is saving capitalism today. But place America's poverty-stricken upon a production for use basis and let the capitalists restrict it sufficiently to preserve the capitalistically necessary poverty, and then see how long the poor will remain unaware of their exile. To preserve itself capitalism will reduce the unemployed to a sorry condition, will allow them to produce only carrots and overalls, working perhaps two days a week. They will not be allowed to produce and consume automobiles, radios, cigarettes, beer, etc.—the so-called luxuries which actually make up a standard of living. Then, on what better grounds can these exiles be expected to revolt?

Don't be deceived by the professional radicals. The American people will act and act quickly once they have intelligent reasons for acting—reasons they can understand. They will fight for their right to enjoy an American standard of living once they perceive they are being deliberately denied it by the capitalist class. But they will never fight, in any number, to free Tom Mooney, to defend the Soviet Union, to prevent fascism, or to effect a few abstract reforms. Idealists and intellectuals may become excited over these things, but the average American never more than half understands them. Yet,

translate the revolution in terms of automobiles, radios, beer and security, into the concrete pleasures of life; give the masses a program in which they can see their own lives made full, which offers them an escape from the eternal tedium of poverty, and you will have a different story. They will fight for these things; though they will never fight merely because some intellectual tells them to.

Our job today, then is crystal clear: destroy the source of hopeful optimism by which capitalism is preserving itself. This means the repudiation of all reforms of capitalism, all doles, all proposed programs of unemployment insurance, etc, and establishing a relief of production for use; which will completely remove the now unemployed from circulation within the capitalist system, and render "recovery" impossible in their own minds. Destroy the efficiency of capitalist ballyhoo and hope, and the revolution will take care of itself; for, indeed, only ballyhoo is saving it in America.

Nor can there be any question about not going all the way. All roads today lead to Socialism. You cannot permanently repair capitalism once it has mechanized itself into oblivion—no more than you can return a full-grown butterfly to its chrysalis state. You may, through fascism and its unpredictable destiny, destroy civilization; but capitalism you cannot save. Its abolition is inevitable.

4

In conclusion, the first phase of EPIC is primarily political: get production for use as a program of relief written into the fundamental laws of the land. The capitalists will aid in this because they cannot do otherwise. They want to rid themselves of the tax burden, which must inevitably increase as unemployment increases. And unemployment will increase. The installation of automatic and semi-automatic machinery is going ahead rapidly, and more and more wage-slaves are being freed from wage-slavery and thrown upon relief. Nothing can halt this process of machine displacement.

To achieve this objective the Democratic Party seems the best suited. For one thing it was, prior to the inauguration of the spoils system, the people's party; and the principles laid down by Jefferson amount to nothing less than a political statement of the Marxian class struggle. For another, it allows us to build upon American traditions, and to appeal to the people in a language they can understand—a thing wellnigh impossible with any third party.

And here, precisely, is our best safeguard against fascism. Orthodox radicals are prone to ignore the power of tradition, and therefore leave the reactionaries to monopolize national history. During late years fascists like Hearst have been permitted to corner "Americanism" and revamp it without being challenged. Moreover, the radicals have even aided the fascists in this "cornering" by appearing to renounce their American citizenship and affinities in favor of International Socialism. In Germany a similar procedure on the part of the German radicals contributed to the rise of Hitler. Historical experience, therefore, dictates that we combat fascism by leaving it nothing with which to fight.

In itself, this goes even further in recommending the Democratic Party. The class line of America in reality constitutes the basis of the so-called two party system—a thing very obvious in Jeffersonian Democracy. This class line is indicated by the terms *Common People* and *Wall Street*, which respectively mean the exploited and the exploiters. Every demagogue knows this, and uses it to climb into office. Huey Long is using it today. So is Coughlin. So are the Grass Rooters. Only the orthodox radicals, bent on teaching the people to say "prole-

tariat" and "worker", refuse to recognize it, and so continue to split the American masses by forming labor parties, workers parties, farmer-labor parties, etc., which excludes some vast section of the people, and leaves them to become the prey of some fascist Moses. In the Democratic Party this unnecessary division and subdivision of the American masses can be avoided.

The second or revolutionary phase of EPIC arises with the problem of removing the restrictions which the capitalists' politicians will impose upon it. The problem itself must in a large measure dictate what is to be done. If those restrictions can be peaceably removed, then capitalism will go out via the route of bankruptcy. If they cannot be peaceably removed, then capitalism will have to be smashed literally by whatever means demanded by the situation at the time. Within this scope the revolution will take care of itself.

In these two phases of EPIC, however, it should be obvious to anyone but a wishful thinking propagandist, that this movement must inevitably terminate in a situation which will result in the speedy overthrow of capitalism. It is not a mere political movement; it is a serious socio-economic one. Politicians right and left may lie about it, but the facts are as plain as day.

It is true, of course, that it can also terminate in a kind of fascism. Indeed, the capitalists will do their best to make it that—they will do all they can to preserve capitalism. All sorts of restrictions will be imposed upon EPIC in order to preserve poverty, which is synonymous with preserving capitalism. And it is up to the revolutionaries themselves whether the capitalists succeed or fail in their fascist efforts. If the American revolutionaries are really revolutionaries, and not merely proletarian English teachers who confuse revolution with teaching a language, fascism will be avoided. In itself, then, EPIC is a forthright challenge to the American radicals, and, in its revolutionary implications, urges them to go to work for Socialism.

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JOHN LEGION

BECAUSE he is denied the curse of work
This man must wear his heart upon his sleeve,
And though the mind rebel and the soul grieve
Give his life story to a neat trim clerk.

He utters his epitaph: "My name is Legion,
John Legion, thirty, wife and children, two;
Oh there is nothing that I will not do!
And I have lived a lifetime in this region."

He has been dead these many months and knows
It not. He wanders in a dream of hope
That reaches nowhere. All about him grope
The ghosts of men, and round about him goes
The yet amazing and quotidian mill
Of worlds he lived in, living somehow still.

—LAWRENCE ESTAVAN

REST HOMES IN SOVIET RUSSIA

BY ROBERT MERRIMAN

This is the second of a series of "bulletins" being written in Soviet Russia at the present time by Robert Merriman of the Department of Economics of the University of California, and sent to friends in San Francisco and Berkeley. Next week Mr. Merriman tells of the collective farms.—Ed.

THE rest home plays a large part in the life of the Soviet worker. In the Crimea and other places in the south there are many of these rest homes to which workers go throughout the year. A special illness is often treated in this way, particularly in the winter when the person really needs a warm climate. In summer these places are filled with workers on their vacations. This usually consists of one month with all expenses paid from the time the worker leaves his home in the city. This is the type of rest home you usually read about.

The second type, one fairly close to Moscow, is owned by the workers of one special factory or organization, and is used only in the summer. This type serves the needs of those who may not be eligible to go south or who do not wish to make such a long trip. I have seen one of this type which belongs to the Hammer and Sickle Auto Factory. Last summer five thousand workers spent their vacations here.

This type resembles a village. There are many small summer houses scattered around in the forest. In the center the eating halls, picture show, club, library, etc., are to be found. Because many like to go out into the woods on the day which they do not work (Free Day as it is called here), these rest homes close to Moscow enable them to bundle up the family and take them there to spend the day.

The third type, which is extremely new and not yet universal by any means, is based on a different principle. Let me describe the history of the one which I have visited. It seems that this organization, a large newspaper for the peasants, had showed during the first Five-Year Plan a surplus as a result of its operations. At that time the employees decided to turn this over to the Government in order to help further the intensified construction of Soviet heavy industry. At the end of the first Five-Year Plan, however, the most fundamental of the basic construction was well under way and the government decided to place greater emphasis on living standards and cultural life than it had previously been able to. On the basis of this it is making refunds to the organizations which donated their surpluses in previous years. This money was to be used in any way that the employees of the organizations might decide. At first this one group contemplated dividing it and passing it out in the form of additional wages. While each person would have received a fair amount, they did not seem satisfied to spend it in this way. They finally agreed that if it were to be spent collectively each would receive a greater benefit over a longer period of time. So they decided on a new type of rest home. At the present time many other groups have also started this same type. In order that I might understand it thoroughly I was invited to spend two days in the one about which I am writing.

We left Moscow on an electric train which in itself struck me as being unusual. It was wider than any I had ever seen. On each side of the aisle were three seats. Each car has a seating capacity of a hundred people. The trains are fast and the forests around Moscow make the trip a scenic one. This par-

ticular electric train has a speed of about 70 miles per hour. Thirty miles from Moscow we climbed off to find ourselves in a small forest village.

Not far from the tracks we found the rest home in the center of a large plot of ground surrounded by a rustic fence. The cleared space is used for growing berries and vegetables for consumption by the workers in the rest home. The building itself is a medium-sized two-story house which had been recently altered and improved. What struck us was the perfect cleanliness of the interior. This is to be more appreciated when one tries to keep a place clean during the part of the year when the spring thaws result in much mud. There we found electric lights, modern plumbing (which is unusual in most small villages), and heavily-carpeted floors. Each person who comes here has a separate room. Each room is small and contains a bed, desk and a cabinet for clothes. We found towels, books, bathrobes, slippers and all the comforts of home. In the main room, which is rather large, we found an enormous pool table, a large sofa and chairs. As a side note, the game of billiards here is not as simple as it is in America. The balls are large and very heavy and the pockets very small.

The food was the finest we have tasted since we have been here. Each dish was well garnished, there was great variety and more than we could hope to eat. After eating, everyone usually takes a short nap or goes for a walk.

There are workers here constantly all during the year. When a person feels tired or in need of a change of atmosphere he is entitled to go to this home to spend as much time as he feels he needs. In some cases where a person's work must be used in the production end of the paper, the organization allows him to take his work out here with him and as it is needed it is sent into Moscow every day by messenger. In other cases, particularly when their home living quarters may be crowded or the presence of children makes it impossible to read or get the necessary rest after working hours, the worker is allowed to live here for a few weeks and commutes to Moscow every day. The place can only accommodate about seven per cent of the workers at any one time, but they have found that this has been approximately right, that being about the number who wish to be here at any certain time. At present they are constructing another building of the same size and when it is completed they will encourage even more of the workers to take advantage of it.

In another direction from Moscow this same organization is planning to build a small children's village which will consist of several houses for children of different ages. During the vacations all the children of workers employed on the paper will go to this rest home. In the summer most of them will live here during the whole season. If a child has difficulty in getting along in the city because of being left alone by his parents who are working he will be sent there to live and will attend the school nearby.

It is interesting to see how the workers react to the change in living which this affords them. Here each person is allowed to do as he pleases and the group activities which are typical of the other types of rest homes are not to be found here. Each person does the thing which is most restful to him. For all of this they do not pay a cent. The whole cost is paid from the amounts which have been refunded to the organization.

On rest days dozens of additional workers make this their headquarters from which they hike or picnic.

The staff of the rest home consists of six workers who mingle with the guests and take part in their games. The best fun I had was playing billiards with the cook. It struck me as rather interesting that the union to which the staff of this rest home belongs also has its rest home not far from the one which I visited.

Close by they are working on the Moscow-Volga canal. This is a great undertaking and will not only solve a great deal of the transportation problem but will also solve the question of Moscow's water supply. It will not be completed until next year.

This type of rest home interested me very much for several reasons. I am studying conditions here and trying to get a picture of the average wages, purchasing power, standards of living, etc. Many men from foreign countries who are not always interested in finding out much that is good about the Soviet Union, study only the wages which are paid and ignore what I have found to be the most important phase of the whole question—the dozens of advantages which are almost impossible to figure out in a monetary way. Every week I find new things of this type which completely change the conditions of living. Naturally men who come here for a month or two do not have the time to find out how numerous and important these things are. Later I shall name and briefly discuss many of these extra advantages.

THE THEATER

HORSES AND HENS

BY WINTHROP RUTLEGE

IF ONE is to judge by the ripples of laughter that spread through the Geary on the opening night of *Three Men on a Horse*, the John Cecil Holm-George Abbott farce gave the audience a great deal of pleasure. The play, as presented by Mr. Alex Yokel, bulges and seethes with hokum of the most flamboyant kind, aromatic of the farces that captivated America from Hackensack, N. J., to Yakima, Wash., in the heyday of the ten, twent', thirt'.

Its hero is a non-bellicose soul who makes his pelf by penning Mothers' Day doggerel for a postcard manufacturer and who amuses himself atop a bus to and from his office by prognosticating the outcome of various horseraces about the land. His hobby is purely non-commercial, and although his hunches as to winners are uncannily accurate, he has never in his life backed one of them with a bet. Such an act, he reasons, would involve his emotions and thus rob him of his gift as a dopester, which art must always be practiced in utter detachment.

In the throes of a spree indulged in because of misunderstandings with his wife and brother-in-law, he falls into the hands of three down-at-heels track touts who discover his gift and see wealth in it. The antics of the play from this point onward are amusing even when horribly overdone because of too lush direction. Erwin, or "Oiwin" as his new friends call him, is still more interested in his postcard jingles than in his

lucrative guesses about the ponies. His new exploiters are compelled to pander to his Olympian yearnings in order to get their track tips and the result is a most uplifting and not entirely unironic discourse on the relation of Erwin's Postcard product to the inspired quatrains to be found on the walls of the nation's lavatories.

Three Men on a Horse would have been far better farce had it not been acted so broadly by Mr. Yokel's company and much better satire had it not been written so broadly by the Messrs. Holm and Abbott. Percy Kilbride gives Erwin a nice touch of pathetic abstraction and Alfred Webster, Frank Otto and Edward Craven make a picturesque trio of track devotees. Muriel Campbell exudes great slices of obtuse pulchritude as the gamblin' man's gal. But alas, it is all laid on too thickly. And, alack, a farce which signifies nothing ought to be a better farce.

TAMING OF THE SHREW

AS AN ardent subscriber to the notion that Shakespearean comedy should be played in the manner of broad and lusty farce, I have the pleasure to record that *The Taming of the Shrew*, as performed last Tuesday evening in the Greek Theater Drama Festival, was a matter of complete satisfaction.

Peggy Wood was entirely worth bringing from Broadway and London (or was it Hollywood?). She made Katharina a lovely if wildcat-like strumpet and she lent the role a combined beauty and vituperative energy that made it something to admire. Rollo Peters was a forceful Petruchio, and he needed to be in order to make credible his final domination over the tempestuous Katherina of Miss Wood. He played the role knowingly and with no weak eye to its value as farce.

Peggy Converse was ravishingly lovely and completely the arrived actress as Bianca. It will be interesting to see her as the chief female figure in *Within the Gates* next week. She is an actress who will go places if this grizzled old reviewer is not badly mistaken. Young Julius Evans, who with the aid of his talented wife, directed the production, proved himself a ranking member of his craft. The characters moved about the stage with a precision that achieved the effect of utter naturalness, and lines everywhere were delivered with both zest and full appreciation of their import.

The horse Petruchio brought to carry away his bride was a droll and angular creature fashioned from two energetic student players. He (or they) symbolized the mood of the performance, and an utterly mad and merry mood it was.

John Grover, as Biondello, did what few professionals have been able to do with any éclat, he gave a description of the spavined equine at a tongue-fracturing speed and never missed the pronunciation of a single syllable. He received a deserved ovation at the end of his cataloguing. Besides that he behaved himself in all ways as a trouper. Frederick Blanchard, Norman Field and Frederick Stover also deserve special mention for their respective work as Grumio, Baptista and Hortensio. The settings were suggested rather than imposed and the costumes fitted the play's antic mood better than they fitted their wearers, which was as it should have been.

Miss Wood, by the way, gave us a new and refreshing version of Katherina. One never felt that she was really as tame as her closing lines indicated, but that she hugely enjoyed spoofing everybody, including Petruchio. Well, why not?

BOOKS

RIGHT ON HIS LINE

BOSS RULE: PORTRAITS IN CITY POLITICS, by J. T. Salter. (Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill) \$2.50

(Reviewed by Lincoln Steffens)

HERE'S a book right on my line. It's a collection into permanent form of magazine articles on the heelers of the Republican, the Vares' machine, of Philadelphia, rounded out into a study of municipal politics. The author started it all when he was on a Pennsylvania faculty; he did what teachers rarely rise or stoop to; he learned from his students who knew their city and its politicians. He ended the book when he had become associate professor of political science at Wisconsin University and had learned that the facts seen in Philadelphia were evidently general. An academic report, the professor makes much of the fact that he met his data in actual life; talked in the wards with the politicians he tells about. It is good, to me commonplace, but down-on-the-ground evidence of the method by which, on charity and personal service, the basis of corruption of the American government is laid. The purposes of this corruption are not stressed. We get out of the book, therefore, an incomplete and thus misleading picture of our living, growing government. Professor Salter did not, could not find that in his sources; heelers do not know it. The confessions he reports come to him as boasts or as politics. The professor has some distance to go to get his science; we, his readers, might wait for him to go on and come back unless we are afraid that like the machine of the Brothers Ware our system of corruption will be wiped out meanwhile. He can glimpse the annihilation sneaking along upon us in Wisconsin as well as in Philadelphia.

AN HONEST VIEW

DAUGHTER OF EARTH—AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, by Agnes Smedley. (Coward-McCann) \$2

(Reviewed by Aileen Strong)

AGNES SMEDLEY knew more than did her parents. She learned, by viewing her experience of life honestly and clearly, that their naive belief in hard work alone as a means of supporting a family was false. That those who worked hardest would earn most seemed true to the parents, but to the daughter the words of the minister at the time of her first visit to church rang truer. He preached on the text: "To him who hath shall be given and from him who hath not shall be taken away."

In *Daughter of Earth* the author tells powerfully, at times brutally, of the life that taught her this bitter truth. Fortunate in her endowment of intelligence and ruthlessness, she was not blinded or misled by a false interpretation of this life. She seemed to see with a perspicacity astonishing in one so young what her father and other workmen around him could not be clear about. In a mine strike the father's sympathy was with the miners, but because he had a few men working for him, he identified himself in some way with his employers; thus he was never very clear about the struggle. But while the father drowned his uncleanness in drink, the daughter, hardened by her comprehension, fought for education and knowledge that

she might not be one of the defeated.

Later, she carried on her fight for the oppressed into India and then China, where she was secretary to Madame Sun Yat Sen. There is none of this later experience, however, in this volume, only the leaven. This book tells the "little drama of the lowly"—the personal drama.

The book is not all tragedy nor only a story of struggle. Those parts telling of the simple farm life in Missouri where communal labor was substituted for hired hands and where the harvest dances and suppers and molasses pulls were led by the author's gay father, who had a way about him, have a note of joy in them.

There are also very poignant bits. One of the most pathetic has a party for a setting. Some of people's unhappiest moments occur when they are supposed to be having a good time. Agnes Smedley was no exception. Because she was the head of her class and could not be ignored (and in spite of the fact that she obviously had no proper clothes), she was invited by one of the little girls who lived on the right side of the track to a birthday party. The invitation was not altogether wholehearted, for the little girl added: "Of course, if you are too busy to come you must not feel that you ought just because I asked you." Little Agnes (she calls herself Marie in the story) did not have "nothing" else to do, so she went to the party and, though her mother protested this unwonted extravagance, took three bananas as a gift. Only the desire to tell her mother all about it—and her determination to know everything even though it hurt—kept her at the party when she discovered how out of place she was there. She did not dare eat, for the other children had "ways" at the table which she could not learn in one lesson, and she had already called enough attention to herself boasting of her father hauling bricks.

Her mother's tears and constant misery embittered her life, Miss Smedley tells us, but they taught her that marriage was defeat for women of her class. This was only one of the lessons that she learned at an early age. At a cigar shop where she worked after school she learned that working conditions and hours of union men only were respected, and that those "who were strong were respected and those who need do not get".

"I am sorry that I knew so much. A young tree cannot grow tall and straight if its roots are always watered with acids," the author says, but she might have noted that although knowledge brings bitterness it also brings to a few such as herself the desire to do something about it.

Daughter of Earth is a strong book. It is filled with tales of At any rate, not to read it is to miss a vital document of today. hate, cruelty, injustice, poverty. Is it too brutal? I think not.

IS IT PROPHETIC?

CONVEYOR, by James Steele. (International Publishers) \$1.75

(Reviewed by Grant Cannon)

LITERATURE of a people mostly reflects the ideology of its ruling class. Often toward the end of an epoch sensitive writers will mirror the ideas of the ruling class-to-be. We may wonder if the flood of proletarian literature which we find in America today could be considered prophetic.

Conveyor by James Steele is a moving story of a worker in the Detroit automobile industry. A story that takes Jim Brogan, a member of the "aristocracy of the proletariat", through

the early stages of the present depression to a point in his life where he accepts the labor union as the solution to the workers' problems.

The beginning is in 1928 when there wasn't a depression, except among the laboring class which was already feeling the pinch of reduced wages, speed-up, unemployment. Throughout the book there is a feeling that there is a great force at work like the pace-setter Steele describes, cool, unflustered, relentless, driving events faster, making the conflicts sharper, grinding men down, breaking their spirits. This force is the functioning of an economic law. Looking at it from this point of view we see a portion of humanity, and a man, his wife and their child in particular, being caught in the grind when industry writhes during a normal economic depression. Normal because the depression is a cyclical thing inherent in the system. Seeing the results of such a collapse show in terms of humanity what the falling lines on a graph show statistically. Long lines of men in front of a factory's employment office, the nerve-cracking tension of the speed-up, the breaking of the morale of the police-badgered unemployed, the desperation that comes with hunger—these tell the same story but more forcefully than the red line which swoops gracefully, if somewhat abruptly, down a fine-lined chart.

The book begins during the Hoover-Smith campaign for the presidency. The book begins the day that Jim Brogan quits his job and returns to his home, on which there are only fifteen more years of payments, to rest for three days before taking another job. The book begins with the depression of 1928. If you are one of those people who think that the depression officially began on October 29, 1929, when a great many people decided to sell stocks and very few wanted to buy, you will be rather surprised at this book. Steele shows the growing unemployment situation, the cutting of wages, the increasing despair among those who looked for jobs during the very time when stock prices continued to tear higher and higher and presidential candidates spoke of maintaining, even increasing, our prosperity. It tells of mechanized men, subservient parts of machines, and their struggles during a time when presidential candidates spoke of rugged individualism and ladies' club speakers told of the horrors of regimentation under communism.

You cannot doubt the author's authenticity when he writes about the factory and its noise, its heavy stamping presses, its swift running precision machines and its endless conveyor belts moving night and day, on and on, setting the tempo of men's lives. His description of a stamping press is so vivid that just the mention of it makes the reader apprehensive, and when he does tell of an accident it is a very much expected thing. The days that Jim Brogan spends in lines waiting for a chance to ask for work and his final effort when he stands all night in the snow, waiting, with other men, until the employment office opens are not soon to be forgotten. It is horrible to watch these men waiting, struggling, enduring anything for the chance to work under rotten conditions, but the author is not horrified. He is there in the line, too tired to be anything but objective.

The author's insistence on telling his whole story from the point of view of one character weakens the book. We wished we could get more than just Brogan's story, could hear the stories of men on the streets, straw bosses, service men, and other workers. We wished that Steele had told more about Bill Seaman and how he happened to become a union organizer. Another bad point in the construction was the abrupt-

ness of the mental changes of his characters.

Most people who are interested in the class struggle will find this book interesting. Those who are just becoming aware of the great struggle going on between the classes will find it informative. Those who have lived the life of a laborer will find themselves in it. Those who have long been class-conscious, but who have felt the tendency to make a fetish of the working class, might find a clarification of their perspective in this book. It is a fine book.

SHE CAN DO IT

TIME: THE PRESENT, by Tess Slesinger. (Simon & Shuster) \$2.50

(Reviewed by Ella Winter)

THIS is the first book of collected short stories to appear after Tess Slesinger's exciting and deservedly popular first novel, *The Unpossessed*. The stories appeared in magazines from *Scribner's* to *Red Book* and from *Forum* to *Vanity Fair*, and they cover a number of very actual phenomena of the day in America. Miss Slesinger can observe and can write her observations and, though the brighter and more up-to-the-minute New York columnist-critic-sophisticates are comparing her to Dorothy Parker, she has something Dorothy Parker hasn't. (She'll probably make a pun about this.) Her trouble lies in the fact that everyone seems to expect her to be like Dorothy Parker and the other bright wits, expects wise-cracks from her that can be quoted at jaded cocktail parties and yawning literary teas. But that isn't her line. And someone ought to be telling her right along that if she isn't yet as polished and scintillating as Miss Parker, so much the better, and let her go her own path and follow her own gifts.

The earlier of these stories are the best: *Mother to Dinner*, a sketch of a girl who is torn between loyalty to her mother, whom she has lived with so intimately for 22 years and to her new husband, after all a stranger; she sees the conflict through her mother's unspoken hurt feelings and has a feeling of betrayal and unfaithfulness—to the mother. *Missis Flinders* is the now famous story of a woman's resentment at the abortion she has had that she and her intellectual husband might remain "free". It is too long and ends unsatisfactorily but is an unsurpassed picture of a rarely treated subject.

But there is something in all the stories: *The Mouse-Trap*, describing the easily intimidated "mice" in an office and how their strike was pinched in the cradle by their blustering high-powered employer; *Jobs in the Sky*, showing a department store from the employees' standpoint—and making human beings of the figures behind the counter most of us only vaguely wonder about as they patter their trite commonplaces. *The Answer on the Magnolia Tree* is a sketch, too long drawn out, of adolescent girls at a swell school, and their various teachers, and translates into glowing words the hazy rose colors through which these girls see the world. The title story *On Being Told That Her Second Husband Has Taken His First Lover* is exactly that, and doesn't add much to the Ursula Parrott-Brush-Delmar school of wistful reflections on modern sex mores.

Tess Slesinger has what is known as a "socially conscious" view of life, and she weaves her "propaganda" into her stories so that they are stories and it is not propaganda; this in itself is a feat. But the stories nevertheless lack the "It" that will make them live, that would make one want to return to them; a depth, an insight, a feeling that the writer cares, really cares—as we'll say Caldwell and the early Hemingway cared

—about writing, not about effect. They are all too long; at one point they all drag; they could easily be cut by about half. *Relax is All* is an incident only; *White on Black* is a sociological observation and never becomes a story.

But Tess Slesinger can do it, as her novel showed and as the best of these stories show. One wishes someone would remove her bodily from bright and literary New York—from the very New York she sees through herself in *After the Party*—and put her among people who want to say it more than they want to be watched saying it. She can assuredly become Dorothy Parker if she wants to; but why give up Tess Slesinger? Tess Slesinger has already a flashlight to see with, a key to social understanding, that Dorothy Parker will never have.

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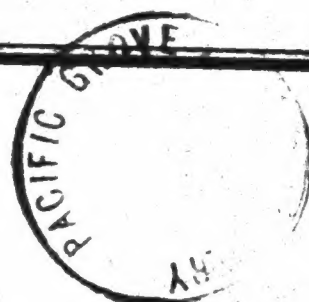
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